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Dissonant Harmonies: Modelling and Conceptualising Improvising Social Groups

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Abstract

Improvisation has attracted increasing attention within organisational and managerial studies as a method to improve efficiency and innovation without adequately understanding the conditions prerequisite for improvisation's operation. This paper examines how the jazz repertoire theory, and New Cultural studies of jazz address improvisation within jazz ensembles, showing neither adequately explaining improvisation. The paper draws on Bourdieu's concepts, fleshed out in Wacquant's ethnography research of habitus acquisition among pugilists to propose a model of the symbiotic ensemble providing the conditions essential for improvisation. Symbiotic ensembles are composed of synergetic musicians, all of relatively equal musical and social status, who have commonly accrued an embodied musical improvising habitus through their musical and life trajectories, from first learning an instrument, transitioning to improvisation, performing in various ensemble settings whereby they acquire influences and become vectors transmitting musical concepts among disparate musical ensembles.

Keywords: improvisation, symbiotic ensemble, synergist musicians, musical trajectory, embodied habitus

Armonías Disonantes: Modelando y Conceptualizando Grupos Sociales de Improvisación

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Resumen

La improvisación ha atraído la creciente atención dentro de los estudios organizacionales y empresariales como método de mejora de la eficiencia y la innovación, sin entender acertadamente las condiciones que las actividades de improvisación requieren. Este artículo analiza como la teoría del repertorio de jazz y los Nuevos Estudios Culturales del jazz abordan la improvisación dentro de los conjuntos de jazz, sin mostrar ni explicar adecuadamente la improvisación. Se parte de la conceptualización de Bourdieu que profundiza la etnografía de Wacquant sobre la adquisición de *habitus* entre boxeadores, para proponer un modelo de conjuntos simbiótico que proporciona las condiciones esenciales para la improvisación. Los conjuntos simbióticos están compuestos por músicos sinérgicos, todos ellos relativamente del mismo estatus social y musical, que han experimentado y acumulado el *habitus* de la improvisación musical a través de sus trayectorias de vida y musicales, desde el primer aprendizaje de un instrumento, realizando una transición hasta la improvisación, tocando en diferentes conjuntos en los que adquirieron influencias y se convirtieron en vectores de transmisión de conceptos musicales entre otros varios conjuntos musicales.

Palabras clave: improvisación, conjunto simbiótico, músicos sinérgicos, trayectoria musical, personificación del *habitus*

Eying the apparent ease jazz musicians improvise to solve problems, and innovate organisational and managerial studies have increasingly proposed improvisation as a panacea for inefficiencies without adequately understanding improvisation's necessary preconditions. Becker and Faulkner proposed sharing a common, practiced, repertoire of standards, supplemented by face-to-face negotiations explained how unacquainted, ordinary jazz musicians could promptly form groups and improvise. Paradoxically, it will be shown that this shared standard repertoire furnishes the resources to improvise unconstrained to reproduce that standard repertoire; their improvisations unconstrained by, reproduce a, constrained standard repertoire. Becker and Faulkner acknowledge other improvising musicians exist who improvise to a heterogeneous post-bop canon whose complexity renders their constitutive sub-styles mutually incompatible, requiring intense rehearsals to enable musicians improvise compatibly. The explanatory worth of their repertoire theory confines to ordinary musicians, unable to explain how musicians innovate that standard repertoire, as well as musicians improvising within their 'post-bop canon' who are often more capable than their ordinary jazz musicians of improvising unprepared upon meeting.

A New Cultural studies approach analyses jazz improvisation as conjoining phrases from existing musical performances signifyin' to undermine discriminatory perspectives on African-American social identities. This asserts the creative, virtuosic skills of improvising musicians while simultaneously undermining musicians' abilities to author, improvise meaning; anyone listening to their improvisations can ascribe signifyin' meaning as readily as the musicians themselves, and does not explain coherent ensemble improvisation. To rectify this, Monson tried combining signifyin' theory with Bourdieu's habitus to explain ensemble improvisation and restore meaningful agency, authorship, to musicians. Citing criticism that habitus is excessively structuralist and incompatible with agency, Monson offered that the improvising ensemble can be applied to restore agency to habitus, whereupon the explicandum, the successful improvising ensemble, becomes its own explanans, to explain how musicians compatibly improvise within ensembles. The utility of Bourdieu's habitus is determined by the explanatory purchase habitus affords research. To give empirical

substance to habitus Wacquant researched how Chicago boxers assiduously training with coaches who provided persistent correctional feedback acquired a sedimented, embodied habitus giving them a feel-for-the game to compete in a ring, anticipating in time and space their opponents moves.

To explain the possibility of musicians coherently improvising within ensembles, contributing to an expansive reproduction of improvised music generally, this paper proposed the symbiotic ensemble model. The symbiotic ensemble needs to be porous whereby authority permeates to all of its constitutive synergist musicians. Compositions are presented within symbiotic ensembles to inspire further development of their guiding concept, successively over performances by their synergist musicians. Synergist musicians are expected, and aspire, to be self-motivated reactive and proactive improvising contributors, who initiate novel contributions to ensembles while responding to their fellow musicians initiatives. Their virtuosic qualities as synergist musicians are the sedimented outcomes of their differentially socially structured life and musical trajectories. Their musical life trajectories commonly begin with music in their home, childhood instrument learning, meticulous study and practicing, learning another instrument, transitioning to improvising, performing in, and accumulating, ensemble experiences, and constant practice, interrogation with their instruments, whereupon they intuit their instruments as embodied with their physical and mental being. Consequently, each musician's life and musical trajectories have chronologically sedimented into their singular habitus whereby they can contribute common and unique musical experiences, skills, knowledge and ideas to any ensemble. Moreover, from having participated in numerous, often globally distributed, variegated improvising collaborations, each musician becomes a conduit whereby innovations and solutions to shared problems within musical materials can rapidly spread, cross-fertilise, whereby the symbiotic ensemble becomes capable of generating more than the sum of its musician parts.

Ambitions for Improvisation within Organisations

Since the 1990s improvisation, modelled on the practices of improvising music ensembles, has increasingly been viewed as potentially affording a

means to introduce flexibility into rigidly structured organisations and social practices to enhance problem solving and creativity in the rapidly changing global environment. However, a lack of clarity and understanding of how improvisation is facilitated within music ensembles impairs its transposition as proposed. In the literature commending improvisation to resolve impairing organisational structures and social practices a transition is observable from a prescriptive, metaphorical application of facets of the jazz improvising ensemble to various social settings (Hatch, 1999) to a more empirically inclined research seeking to find evidence of improvisation being practiced in organisations and crisis situations, whereby the promise of improvement loses some of its prescriptive edge. Nevertheless this is a burgeoning diverse research field encapsulating teaching physicians (Irby, 1992); doctor-patient relations (Haidet, 2007); social worker-client relations (McKinney, 2001); disaster response (Wachtendorf & Kendra, 2005) organisations (Miner, Bassoff, & Moorman, 2001); new product development (Moorman & Miner, 1998); public administration (Vera & Crossan, 2005).

Early efforts to transfer the improvisation jazz ensemble model generally outlined elements thought essential for flexibility and creativity to loosen regulated practices. Respecting patient-physicians interactions, Haidet quotes jazz musician Miles Davis: *Man, you don't have to play a whole lot of notes. You just have to play the pretty ones...* (2007, p. 165). Haidet concluded from this:

As a physician, I strive to use communicative space as Miles did. Rather than take up all the space in the conversation with strings of 'yes/no' questions or long physiological explanations, I find that I am at my best when I can give patients space to say what they want to say, using my communications to gently lead patients through a telling of the illness narrative from their perspective... (2007, p. 165)

How should leaving space for patients to relate their symptoms or leading patients' symptom narrations without imposing a medical perspective be determined, and also considered as improvisation? Barrett proposes that as jazz musicians convert occurrences of errors through improvisation into creative innovations:

Rather than simply rewarding managers for ‘fixing’ problems, perhaps organisations should consider the way managers persevere and make use of mistakes as points of creative departure (Barrett, 1998, p. 611)

Why recommend errors in actions as necessary departure points to improvise creative, productive transformations without indicating how improvisation is workable in specific contexts? Vagueness and imprecision concerning improvisation brought empirical research of organisations and contexts which suggested that improvisation was being practiced which only needed enlarging and enhancing:

People in organisations are often jumping into action without clear plans, making up reasons as they proceed, discovering new routes once action is initiated, proposing multiple interpretations, navigating through discrepancies, combining disparate and incomplete materials and then discovering what their original purpose was. To pretend that improvisation is not happening in organisations is to not understand the nature of improvisation (Barrett, 1998, p. 617)

Such research on improvisation in organisations tends to consider encountering outcomes expected of improvisation as evidence of its practice itself, and to equate ad-lib problem solving with learned, efficacious improvisation.

Research commending the jazz improvisation model to inject flexibility and creative innovation into organisations where rigid structures, regulations, and inflexible role requirements hinder efficient functioning, generate counterproductive, unintended consequences, is currently burgeoning. Research initially prescribed improvisation for where it commonly thought applicable to improve practices and creativity through metaphorically drawing on elements of improvisation as practiced by jazz ensembles. Lack of precision and evidence led to empirical research on improvisation in situ to demonstrate its applicability in varied contexts which required simply expanding its application to enhance its efficacy. Nevertheless, this more empirical research a) lacks conceptual precision whereby improvisation becomes equated with any real-time problem solving operating outwith operational pre-planning, and b) unexpectedly finds that

improvisation in practice can have negative, not only positive, consequences (Miner, Bassoff, & Moorman, 2001). Introducing improvisation into organisations confronts the problem of trust, the principle agent problem, to address which managerial hierarchies were constructed. Recommendations for expanding the application of improvisation encounter problems with the organisational structures which hierarchically and unequally disperse the authority of decision making, and curtail individual's discretionary abilities to modify their practices: simultaneous with originating constraints and problems for which improvisation is proffered as their solution, the constraining structural and organisational hierarchies are simultaneously required to afford the conditions and resources to facilitate improvisation to surmount these self-engendered difficulties and yield creative innovations. Constraining organisational structures, authority and reward hierarchies are to afford individuals free social action, or the ability to choose to act differently to more efficiently reproduce that hierarchical organisation and its practices; their conditions they provide for, are incompatible with, improvisation.

Improvisation in Cultural and Social Theory

This section considers two approaches of Howard Becker and Robert Faulkner and of the New Cultural Theory of Jazz to improvisation within jazz ensembles.

Becker and Faulkner

Howard Becker's interests in jazz commenced in the 1940s when he performed jazz piano and researched dance musicians. Recently he collaborated with Robert R. Faulkner, jazz trumpeter and sociology professor, to research what enables musicians on first meeting to play and improvise as competently as coherent ensembles:

Jazz improvisation... (more or less) combines spontaneity and conformity to some sort of already given format.... Improvised solos are spontaneous, yes. But the people who play them have often worked long and hard to become familiar with the harmonic and

melodic ‘bones’ of the tune they will later improvise on in public. The solos they perform do conform to those basic structures but cannot be predicted from a knowledge of what the players have learned and practiced beforehand.... What ‘sounds good’ against the basic chords of the original song varies from player to player and time to time. And players often disagree on what is allowable in an improvisation (Becker & Faulkner, 2009, p. 28)

Their musicians engage in micro-negotiations to facilitate social and musical harmony concerning tune selection, speed and beat, tonal key, etc., to navigate their way through their shared, studiously learned and practiced repertoire that structures the musical context within which they ‘spontaneously’ improvise:

Performances thus exhibit neither the regularities of a highly formalised system of knowledge and behaviour nor the total chaos of lack of shared knowledge would produce.... We aim to... explain both the stability and the variability of what they played from one night to the next, looking at what happens from two angles: on the one hand, what players are thinking about when they respond to suggestions and, on the other, some routinised methods they use to deal with the problems that inevitably arise (Becker & Faulkner, 2009, p. 143)

They propose that studiously learned and practiced repertoires structure musician’s improvisations which themselves cannot be anticipated, yet which reproduce that structuring repertoire. The repertoire furnishes cultural, normative structures as songs within which musicians’ improvisations and performances cannot be fully derived nor fully contained in performances that reproduce the structuring repertoire.

They distinguish two repertoire typologies: an Older ‘standard’ repertoire, vaguely defined as jazz from the 1930s until the late-1950s performed by musicians to the present; and a ‘post-bebop canon’ less precisely defined as heterogeneous styles, groups of musicians, and approaches to jazz and improvisation from late-1950s modal and free jazz until the present:

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Since no central source produces this newer jazz repertoire - there's no post-bop equivalent to Tin Pan Alley – and since it has no large popular following, many varieties have always coexisted and none has ever dominated the field.... No universal 'what everyone knows' can be counted on as a basis for playing together (Becker & Faulkner, 2009, p. 118)

Here the limits of their repertoire approach to improvisation become apparent: it applies to improvisation within their standard repertoire as performed by their subjects:

We've worried over how to describe the kind of musicians we studied... Our subtitle, using the word 'jazz,' might mislead readers into thinking the book is about famous players... It's not. ...we can most accurately describe these players by... calling them 'ordinary musicians.' That is, players competent in a variety of styles, ready to do what is likely to come up in most engagements, interested in jazz and aiming to play it when they can. But in the end doing whatever the world throws their way (Becker & Faulkner, 2009, p. 15-16)

Their sample of 'ordinary musicians' improvising their standard repertoire omits more competent musicians as well as musicians within post-bop, free jazz, the New York Downtown music scene, and free improvisation:

When we look at... contemporary jazz, we see... experiments. The remarkable pianist and leader Uri Caine... produces programs... based... on Hungarian folk songs or the symphonic works of Gustav Mahler. If you have not rehearsed with Uri Caine you will almost surely not know these songs, or the way he wants them played. ...few people can make a living or, what's more to the point, find it possible to play very often with others when their repertoire consists of such esoteric material (Becker & Faulkner, 2009, p. 180)

Their sample of ordinary players compromises their ability to explain jazz improvisation, and improvisation more widely as currently practiced. Had they studied more established musicians in their standard or post-bop

jazz repertoires, and the improvisation musical world their results would probably have differed from those they obtained. They would likely have found greater overlap in performance relations among jazz and improvising musicians. Secondly, Becker and Faulkner could have developed their idea of musical community, to consider how musical communities in different parts of the US, and around the world, share members who overlap and intermingle with one another, spreading ideas of improvisation. Thirdly, semi-professional or professional musicians with a higher musical reputation among fellow status musicians are less often obliged to play music they dislike, and more able to engage with a wider repertoire of materials than they report for their subjects.

New Cultural Theory

From the 1990s a New Cultural studies approach emerged that applied poststructural and deconstructive techniques to analyse jazz improvisation as a 'transgressive' expression of the African-identity and diaspora (Fischlin & Heble, 2004, p. 16). Theirs is an anti-essentialism argument, which simultaneously attributes trans-historical and trans-global defining facets to jazz as originating in an African diasporic sensibility (Monson, 2000), and/or in a pre-slavery African signifyin' sensibility (Gates, 1988).

New cultural studies writers analyse improvising jazz solos as signifying intertexts, which they hold to be both indeterminate, free, and determinate, structurally located: improvised solos are constructed by quoting, signifying upon past solos. This implies a cut-and-paste, montage, method of improvisation. Analysing Miles Davis' 1964 performance of *My Funny Valentine*, Walser contends:

Now we can say that Davis is signifyin' on all of the versions of the song he has heard; but for the audience, Davis is signifyin' on all of the versions each listener has heard.... Moreover, Davis is no doubt engaging with the many Bennett-like performances... he must have heard, but he is also signifyin' on his own past performances (Walser, 1995, p. 173)

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In this article defending Miles Davis against charges of virtuosic incompetence Walser ascribes improvisational signifyin' to Miles and to all listeners, thereby destabilising authorial improvisational intent and meaning:

...‘signifyin’ retains the vernacular of agency.... Signification is logical, rational, limited; from this perspective, meanings are denotative, fixed, exact, and exclusive. Signifyin’, conversely, works through reference, gesture, and dialogue to suggest multiple meanings through association (Walser, 1995, p. 168)

Engendering escalating possible meanings Walser’s signifyin’ account emaciates the agency he attributes improvisation, and undermines his defence of Miles as an exceptionally gifted musician who transfigured jazz improvising aesthetics and, pursuing risky, momentous virtuosic performances, transformed how jazz and classical trumpeters approached their instruments to enhance its fluid, emotional capacities.

Ingrid Monson utilises poststructuralist, deconstructionist signifyin’ theory, but suggests that as jazz improvisation is aural, instrumental, and wordless, the term ‘intermusical’ signifyin’ is used rather than ‘intertextual’ signifyin’. Uncomfortable with the disembodied social actor and lack of social action in poststructuralist theory, she proposes a synthesis with the sociological theorising of Giddens and Bourdieu to explain jazz improvisation as meaningful social action:

...improvisational music... is a form of social action, as well as a symbolic system; that one learns how to feel through music as well as to play scales, chords, rhythms, and repertory; that musicians articulate cultural commentary with sound itself; and that the aesthetic of interaction embodies very powerfully an ethos that binds its participants into something larger than the individual but less totalizing and ahistorical than "Culture" with a capital C. (Monson, 1994, p. 313)

For Monson musical culture structures and facilitates improvised musical social action to reproduce that musical culture, and create community:

By stressing the activity of music making as something that creates a community, I am purposefully moving away from an idea of community that is defined by a particular geographic location or a particular social category, such as race, class, or gender. Rather, I am interested in the ways in which the latter social categories (and their representations) intersect *within* the activity of jazz performance... (Monson, 1996, p. 13-14)

Monson suggests that riffs¹, repetition and groove enable musicians to creatively, freely improvise, and that the social organisation of improvising musicians reveals social action reproducing social structure locally and globally:

Riffs and repetition also provide an opportunity to revisit the ethnomusicological theme of ‘sound structure as social structure’ ...and consider how its classic articulation in the discussion of a small egalitarian society might be of use in thinking about intercultural interaction and global musical circulation in highly asymmetrical contexts (Monson, 1999, p. 32)

Riffs, repetition, and grooves facilitate improvised social action that reproduces musical structures:

Call and response... continuous riffs, groove defining rhythmic patterns, and dense layering and overlap of rhythmic (and simultaneously harmonic and melodic) figures all contribute to a musical texture in which repetitions is both fundamental and a source of variety.... In addition, they are used to set up spaces for improvisational exchange.... the relationship that we see here in the transcription are simultaneously human interactions that take place through the performance of sound and are musically, culturally, and economically more complex than any notation can render (Monson, 1999, p. 36)

What she has presented as explaining improvised social action needs itself to be explained: what enables musicians using these social interactions of riffs, repetitions, and grooves to improvise freely beyond them yet

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reproduce them within coherent ensembles? To address this she turns to Bourdieu's habitus:

My suggestion that an image of musical repetitions and their combination have possibilities for thinking about (1) intercultural dimensions of cultural analysis and (2) the problem of locating individuals and subgroups within a global field of cultural and social forces... builds upon Bourdieu's idea of habitus, which is itself indebted to a musical metaphor-culture (habitus) as a 'generative principle of regulated improvisations'. Bourdieu developed the idea of habitus to describe the interaction between structures, embodied dispositions, and actions in the production and reproduction of culture (Monson, 1999, p. 48)

Bourdieu intended habitus to render the structure – agency dualism redundant, whereas Monson considers both entailed. For Monson the structures provided by the culture and musical theory of jazz with its riffs, repetitions and grooves facilitates the inventive, transgressive improvisation and agency of musicians who, in performance, signify to reproduce those originating structures. Seeking to explain improvisation in jazz, Monson pursues a path of 'signifyin'', poststructuralist and deconstructionist theories to recoil from their determinism and seek theories to reintroduce social agency. No sooner does she offer Bourdieu as a way to understand the transmission of the culture and practice of music than she worries that it too might be overly structuralist:

... his concept of habitus was conceived to describe the taken for granted aspects of homogeneous cultural contexts, his larger framework, which puts forth the idea that individual agents seek the accumulation of symbolic, economic, and cultural capital within various fields of endeavour, has much to recommend it for extension to more heterogeneous contexts (Monson, 1999, p. 49)

No sooner has she set habitus informing individual strategies of action to pursue individual improvisation than she abandons Bourdieu to suggest:

...that the vision of 'regulated improvisations' needs fleshing out with the musical logic of layered periodic repetitions that structure processes of improvisation... (Monson, 1999, p. 49)

Now the jazz ensemble utilising layered repetitions to improvise can be applied to remove the structural bias of habitus enabling adequate inclusion of social action. First, she recommends habitus to restore action to adequately explain successful ensemble improvisation, only next recommended the practices of ensemble improvisation as adequate to restore social action to habitus. Secondly, ironically, she metaphorically compares habitus to the layered riffs, repetitions and groove of the improvising group. Thus, she cycles back and forth between action and structure as incompatible and necessary; the structure of the groove and the action of the improvisation. She later writes: *Here groove is an analogy for culture as process in much the same way as Bourdieu's concept of habitus is* (Monson, 1999, p. 52).

Thus, if habitus lacks the flexibility to accommodate action of the improvising musician, and groove is similar to habitus; why isn't groove similarly overly constraining?

Monson's theoretical and empirical approach can be characterised as itself pursuing riffs and repetitions; she states a problem, a riff, then suggests an author can illuminate solving the problem, but only to a point, then she introduces a mirroring counterpoint, a second riff, leading to another author who helps solve this problem, but not adequately, leading to another riff, and on and on. We learn a lot about what she is interested in illuminating, and wants to do, but she never resolves her expositions into coherent wholes.

Bourdieu: Habitus, Embodiment, Feel-for-the-Game

Bourdieu an empirically engaged social theorist considers improvisation within habitus as *...the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations* (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 78). Bourdieu formulated habitus to render unnecessary dualisms such as subjectivity and objectivity, structure and action, yet habitus is nevertheless often judged by dualistic standards rather than by its explanatory purchase. He describes habitus as a 'structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures' that *generate*

and organise practices and representations... objectively adapted to outcomes without conscious intent (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 53). Habitus, as integrated systems of socialised dispositions, homologous with social class and location within the structure of fields, makes virtue of necessity, such that specific habitus become manifest: ...in the most automatic gestures or the apparently most insignificant technique of the body... an engage the most fundamental principles of construction and evaluation of the social world (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 466).

Habitus become embodied such that, *The body is in the social world but the social world is in the body (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 152)*. While, habitus is sometimes assessed primarily on theoretical and logical grounds as overly determinist and structuralist and affording no space for agency or improvisation it is necessary to evaluate the explanatory worth of habitus within empirical research settings. Bourdieu himself denies that habitus is overly-determinist:

Through the *habitus*, the structure of which it is the product governs practice, not along the paths of a mechanical determination, but within the constraints and limits initially set on its inventions. This infinite yet strictly limited generative capacity is difficult to understand so long as one remains locked in the usual antinomies – which the concept of the habitus aims to transcend – of determinism and freedom, conditioning and creativity, consciousness and unconsciousness, or the individual and society. Because the *habitus* is an infinite capacity for generating products – thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production... (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 55).

He contends it is not the concept that is determining, it is the structured conditions of stratified social life that are constraining. Bourdieu says habitus facilitates *regulated improvisations*; improvisation is generated within the conditions of its own creation, not from the necessity to be contrived out of and in contradiction to those conditions, in order to be free to ‘rectify’ structural ‘overdeterminism’.

Bourdieu is careful to avoid generating social action which is meaningless as disembodied value rational action that reproduces structures which cannot contain those generative actions. Musical improvisation could

be posed as disinterested aesthetics, composing a relatively autonomous field of practices to be chosen as value rational action. What fatally undermines this distinction is that the aesthetic value rational ends of improvisatory practices themselves become resources for future improvisatory practices; the ends become the conditions and the conditions become the ends; value rational action collapses into rational action within the cultural and aesthetic field. The resources for improvisation precede its practice, whereby the resources located, extracted and recombined innovatively are utilised in expanding practices reproducing and enlarging the field.

Bourdieu perceives regulated improvisation as required for agents to adapt effectively to situations of disjuncture between the historically sedimented structured dispositions of their habitus and changed social contexts or where novel social fields are encountered. Such disjuncture ensues from social structural change over time rendering outmoded the relevant, class specific, habitus attained from birth, or where social agents encounter fields or sub-fields beyond the bounds of their everyday life, and thus beyond their accrued habitus of knowledge, skills and experiences. Such contexts motivate social agents needs for reflexivity, as each field of structured possible positions is governed by its own specific logic of social practices and sought for field-specific symbolic, and other, capitals which invoke distribution struggles over capital. When individuals find themselves in unfamiliar fields they are impelled to reflexively transpose and improvise upon their existing habitus. Implied also is that where individuals operate in multiple, unlike fields, cross-field transposition of specific habitus may occur and be applied by social agents who may solve problems encountered in one field by transposing ideas and practices from a different field specific habitus.

Adequate participation within fields entails that social agents acquire the practical logic, rules and bodily practices governing the field, such that they have an instinctual sense of how to perform within that field in relation to others positioned within social space relationally to themselves. Bourdieu writes:

The good player, who is so to speak the game incarnate, does at every moment what the game requires. That presupposes a permanent capacity for invention, indispensable if one is to be able to adapt to

indefinitely varied and never completely identical situations... One's feel for the game is not infallible; it is shared out unequally between players, in a society as in a team... But this freedom of invention and improvisation which enables the infinity of moves allowed by the game to be produced (as in chess) has the same limits as the game (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 63)

Rather than being a rigid, overdetermined device habitus suggests ways in which improvisation is introduced within practices within fields, and is applicable to explaining how improvisation is possible within improvising ensembles. Unfortunately, Bourdieu says very little on how on how individuals acquire habitus specific to any field: how do individuals acquire the knowledge and intricate physical and motor skills necessary for to have a practical 'feel for the game', whereby:

The habitus, as society written into the body, into the biological individual, enables the infinite number of acts of the game – written into the game as possibilities and objective demands – to be produced; the constraints and demands of the game, although they are not restricted to a code of rules, *impose themselves* on those people... who because they have a feel for the game, as feel, that is, for the immanent necessity of the game, are prepared to perceive them and carry them out (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 63)

Wacquant's ethnographic study of learning the craft of boxing suggests that it takes 8 years of training to reach competition readiness. He points out that,

...the specific *bodily sensitivity*... cannot be effected by an act of will or a conscious transfer of information. It necessitates... an imperceptible embodiment of the mental and corporeal schemata imminent in pugilistic practice that admits of no discursive mediation or systematisation. This progressive bodily self-transformation is akin to a process of sedimentation whereby the practical mastery of the actional gestalts... slowly seeps into 'one's organismic ground' (Wacquant, 1995, p. 72)

Learning the craft entails intense training over years to inculcate a perception of their body in space relationally with their opponent's moving body in the ring, as a constant, daily task necessarily repetitively trained and practiced, incurring deprivations for their daily, family life. Wacquant's study makes clear such unified knowledge and bodily skills are not attained alone: trainers closely monitor the boxer's training and bodily movements, their sparing, interactions and communications with other boxers and trainers in the gym. It is the constant regular and extensive activities of training, feedback, interaction and communication that enabled these boxers to develop their feel for the game, intending to anticipate and outwit their opponents by improvising new attacks, defences and evasions. In this study, Wacquant details how a field-specific habitus is acquired, embodied slowly over time, putting detail and substance into a habitus that while durable also requires constant practice to replenish and maintain their peak mind-body facilitated intuitive action. Improvising musicians similarly practice relentlessly whereby their musical knowledge, and tactile skills become embodied, with instruments conceived as extensions of their selves. They usually strive to accomplish a feel-for-the-game within ensemble performances to attain refined instinctive capacities to anticipate apt responses to other musicians' performance and innovations.

Theorising Improvising Ensembles

This section proposes a draft model, theory and set of concepts to clarify the social organisation and practices of improvising ensembles, indicating some resources of creative innovation and the dispersion of influence that have invigorated improvisation. To do this it will draw on the explication of preceding sections, interview and questionnaire data obtained from 1,320 musicians globally between 2001 until 2014, and also published interviews, autobiographical materials and information drawn from social media channels of Facebook, and Twitter, and on-line musician blogs.

First, it will examine the social organisation of the improvising group, and its internal organisation intending to inspire improvisation and group creativity, then the individual members to conceptualise and theorise their musical contribution to improvising performance, collective or individual,

within ensemble. Next, I want to consider the overlapping networks of musicians, and other artistic activities and provinces (nationally and internationally), to explain relatively rapid the expansion of knowledge and practices of improvising ensembles and musicians, and the spread of innovations throughout the improvisatory field. The main concepts proposed will be the symbiotic ensemble, emergent properties, the synergistic improvising musicians, habitus, embodiment, feel-for-the-game intersubjective communication, biographical trajectories, musical trajectories, and overlapping network memberships.

The Symbiotic Ensemble

The symbiotic ensemble emerged from the history of jazz improvisation and its musical offspring free jazz, as well as 20th century avant-garde classical music in the form of Dada, Fluxus (Mengelberg, 1996) the music of Chance, Cage. These provide an extremely varied source of musical ideas and knowledge, as well as inspiration to combine improvising in music, with improvising in other spheres of the arts.

The symbiotic ensemble exhibits a relatively low level of hierarchy and is relatively porous whereby authority permeates to its constitutive musicians, rather than remaining overly or solely concentrated in the leader, who, nevertheless, retains an edge of greater authority over any other because of their role congregating the musicians, arranging performances, and tours. (The leaders usually conduct the latter on their own volition, unless they are arranged by agents of musicians.) Consequently there is considerable need for interactive negotiation among members during planning, rehearsals, with discussions of compositions, the musical interrelationships of instruments, the guiding concept for pieces. Intimate negotiation during stage performances is apparent, and which Becker and Faulkner noted as fleeting and easily missed, as whispers, verbal exchanges, musical cues, eye contact, facial expressions, body movements, etc. Symbiotic ensembles are social groups composed of synergist, complementing musicians who are steeped in the centuries sedimented musical materials, musical interactions and techniques entailed for symbiotic ensembles to generate synergetic improvised outcomes. Within the symbiotic ensemble each musician is

mutually expected to contribute proactively to attain emergent properties, creative musical outcomes greater than the sum of its parts, and more than attainable by a hierarchically or functionally integrated and reproducing group of individuals. Each musician is expected to add to and modify the musical conception of the composition, or collective improvisation in every performance of it, rather than repetitively render the piece relatively unchanged. Each musician is expected and required to intently listen to each other musician to hear, comprehend and respond to novel interjections and innovations to successfully build upon them, while retaining the pieces' coherence and originating conceptual intent. The symbiotic ensemble in public performance is orientated and organised to interactively solve musical and creative problems, resolve unintended 'error', and to extend musical processes in real-time, mutually stimulating other members thinking and execution of tasks. The symbiotic group strives to attain emergent properties through improvisation: whereby the output of collectively improvised performance is greater than the sum the musicians' inputs.

Evidenced by my research with improvising musicians globally is that commonly they are musically engaged with around five improvising ensembles, meaning dissimilar musical concepts, at any one time, with new projects being added regularly, older ones either mothballed, or concluded. Each improvising ensemble is organised around a musical and artistic concept to inspire the process of music making. These may involve distributing detailed or vaguely scored musics, or simply a set of images, or instructions, or could be multi-media projects. For example Dave Douglas provides scores to inspire musicians expected to veer from, while adding to these. Dutch musician Ab Baars improvised on tenor saxophone accompanied by sculptor Alexandra Engelfriet improvising clay sculpture with her arms, legs and body (Baars, 2013). One Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra project involved improvising in response to the screening of a silent archival film of 1930s Glasgow (GIO, 2013a) whereas another project, *Some I Know, Some I Don't*, used instructions written on playing cards to invoke ensemble improvisation (GIO, 2013b), as described by 5 of the (GIO, 2013c) musicians:

A: The first card I read asked me to sing through my melodica in an old style radio announcer (laughter)...

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B: I am supposed to be playing a song that I cannot even remember the name of.... *Midnight at... Midnight at... Oasis*. I can't remember the song when I am playing.

C: I've to play some of my favourite repertoire of JS Bach with the back of my left hand, and it's painful.

D: I have to think what what business you move into if I weren't playing the French horn... Alternately just play yourself a little fanfare.

E: There is one that is not possible to do because it is illegal ([GIO, 2013c](#))

The illegal activity was smoking a cigarette on stage.

Images

Dave Douglas leads numerous musical projects with varied groupings of musicians. Each project is informed by a conceptual theme with scored parts composed around each musician to elicit their distinctive voice and improvisational capacities to encourage musicians to mutually stimulate, inspire, astonish and support one another's improvising:

Each piece works differently... I like to work very pragmatically - once I've written the large ideas of a piece, I'm most concerned with making it work for the band. That means that each person has a part that makes sense and they are happy to play; and that they have enough flexibility within the part to find new things and provoke the parameters of the piece. Also important to me is that the harmony, melody and rhythm somehow get clearly expressed.

I try occasionally to write forms that invite surprise and unpredictability. ...I try not to have expectations of what will happen, but to play and watch what arises, then to think further and talk about it and continue exploring ([Douglas, 1999](#))

The compositions and performances instigate a path for future development of the piece, within its conceptual framework. There is musical negotiation in performance and discussion before and after performance about the success and direction the music took. There is an expectation that

the sum of the parts from the performance is greater than the conceived composition, and is expected to be cumulatively greater in every performance thereafter with each project ensemble, and there is a reflexive discussion among the musicians about the performances and the directions they are taking: *I let everyone come to their own conclusions of how to play and improvise. If things get really far away from the intent of the compositions, then we talk* (Douglas, 1999).

The composer and leader authority maintains the direction of the music project. The musicians are expected to improvise upon the composition to augment the composition by discerning and originating new musical ideas, that surprise fellow improvisers respond anew to these instigative improvised elements, bringing some risk of failure.

Here intersubjective communication and negotiation is reported among the musicians when they are improvising in performance. They play the parts as written and diverge from those as and when they are inspired to do but elements of the music written and performed or as the other musicians introduce surprising elements to their playing and mutual improvisation. To do this requires an intense listening, hearing with a deep, instinctual a comprehension of the music. As with listen, think and respond; there is musical dialogue among the musicians. Each musician must have big ears, meaning not only the ability to hear the sounds but that to digest, interpret it, deeply comprehend it, and conceive more from it than is there so far. This is extremely demanding on the players, and obviously sometimes the music is just not happening:

We're pushing ourselves, but we're having a high percentage of success. Some nights you go out, and everyone is pushing themselves, and it's just not gelling... So those are the kind of risks that go into it. The most wonderful thing is when you find a new space and it's just perfect, and it serves the piece, and the moment of the performance, and all the players have a part within it that's fulfilling and satisfying for them... I think that's the feeling I'm describing, of not knowing, and it's not something that can be captured. It's something that is ephemeral, and once the gig is over; it's over (Douglas, 1999 circa).

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There is a strong interactive communication within these sorts of collective performances of the symbiotic ensemble, during and after performances. One evening in a small club in New York City I overheard a conversation immediately following the first set between the lead musician and their highly respected bassist, who performed with Anthony Braxton, about a change he inserted:

Satoko: “We did that little rehearsal this afternoon, and we have been playing together for... how many years Mark?”

Mark: “Oh, egh, [jokingly] what twenty?”

Satoko: “Yeh, so many years. When you changed that and made it a bowed you surprised me, after my solo in the third one here [she picks out the section on the piano], I did not expect that but it worked and it changed the feeling of it... egh, my approach to the solo the way you came in low and soft, which was good, it brought another tone and way of thinking. It came out good, maybe better... don't you think Mark... maybe we should leave that in there, don't you think?”

Mark: “If you think so Satoko, it's your gig, it is your piece, you're the boss on this one. I was not so sure though, I was not sure when to come in there, where your solo was ending. I know I was supposed to play this [demonstrates] but then decided to put that bowed stretch in there [plays that segment]. But you need to give me a clue when to come in, I did not know when to come in there, I kind of lost it there [Laughs].”

Satoko: “But that was fine Mark, it was your feeling, it was fine. You can come in at any one of those points, any time there... I had thought after the part where I [hums, picks it out on piano], but what you did is good. That was fine, I like it, let's do it that way.

Their negotiation was mutually deferential in tone, eased by body language, laughter, and praise. They had long performed together, yet still mutually surprised, and inspired. The bassist experienced uncertainty with the piano improvisation and altered his approach. The leader commenting on that alteration provoked anxiety that his alteration to the rehearsed approach neither fitted nor pleased, which brought the assuring response that she appreciated the change and could play whatever he felt appropriate at any time. Later, in personal communication with myself, the lead musician said

she chose her musicians because she trusted them, knew their abilities and was fully acquainted with their musical ‘personalities’: She said, “whatever they want to do is fine, I trust them. They are all great musicians. I trust them.” Mutual trust is important within symbiotic ensembles; once trust is broken it can irrevocably break an improvising ensemble.

The symbiotic ensemble requires relative equality of authority which spreads porously through the ensemble members, with an edge of greater authority concentrated in the leader amplified by their musical reputation among improvising musicians. The leader congregates the musicians around a conceptual musical project for improvised performances; the concept governing the project. The compositions, which the other musicians may also contribute, inspire musical direction and are not to be performed closely as written. They are composed to elicit the full richness of their musical identities and instrumental voices while impelling their imaginations and skills further onward beyond the familiar to inspire novel expansion while remaining within the musical concept. The concept and compositions grow with each performance as the synergetic musicians develop it through interactive, and intersubjective musical, visual, bodily, and verbal communications. These musicians often reflexively interrogate the evenings performance to learning from, and improving upon, them in future.

The Synergistic Musician

Improvising musicians within symbiotic ensembles seek to be synergistic musicians; self-motivated musicians who interact inspirationally with other musicians within ensembles such that their mutual interaction can lead to progressive elaboration, refinement, and development of the music and ensemble performance. This interaction should enhance their instrumental virtuosity, musical imagination and knowledge, further enriching their effective reactive and proactive within symbiotic ensembles in future performances.

The totality of their life trajectory equips musicians to improvise synergistically within symbiotic ensembles, especially their musical life trajectory in the development of their musical habitus over years of learning and practicing instrumental technique, becoming imbued with various

musics through and beyond childhood, and evolving through converting from playing composed to improvised music necessitating learning the skills and inventive techniques required for improvising. Their musical life trajectories of practice and learning sediments continuously as they perform as members of various symbiotic ensembles as their career unfolds. They participate in networks of musicians within musical community, usually global in nature, as they perform with musicians in other countries and forge global musical friendships and associations. They are usually contemporaneously involved in numerous symbiotic ensembles pursuing dissimilar musical concepts and innovations, whereby they become bridging personnel, enabling innovations and musical conceptions to cross networks that may otherwise remain separate and unknown. Through their initial instrument learning, constant practice, encouragement, immersion in a musical environment from childhood, when they were commonly identified as talented or gifted performers, their transition to improvised music, continued learning, practicing, beginning to participate in improvising groups, practicing, they develop a feel-for-the-game. Musical skills and knowledge become embodied, and their instruments sensed as bodily extensions, defining self-identity.

Bourdieu's habitus are socialised, transposable dispositions ingrained as second nature and embodied dispositions, unconsciously structuring understanding, expectations and actions. Habitus socialised from birth through to early adulthood are, for Bourdieu are entrenched for life, while habitus specific to fields can be learned later in life through study and practice, and engagement within fields. Thoroughly ingrained and embodied habitus facilitate a feel for the game, such as with playing sports, and indeed music.

The interview and questionnaire data of improvising musicians globally reveals how they acquired and maintain their improvising music habitus from childhood, through teenage years and continuing in adulthood. Most started to learn an instrument before the age of 10, 81%, 64% did so because of their parents or having an instrument at home; 60% studied classical music, 33% studied classical, with pop and/or jazz. (Only 15% started studying the popular music of their day, usually in their teens). The most usual instrument first learned was piano, 40%, then clarinet or recorder,

10%, violin, 5%, percussion and so on; choice of first instrument was influenced by it being easy to start with, or having one in the house, or parental preference or influence: *Drums, my father was a professional drummer. Or, Recorder, cello, acoustic bass. My parents put me in an environment (music school) where it all came automatically. I was a kid;-).* A most remarkable first instrument was the moog synthesiser:

Moog. My uncle was a composer in serial music (Stockhausen) & founder of IPEM at the University of Ghent. IPEM stands for Institute for Psycho-acoustics & elektronik music. He always did let me experiment with all the instruments.

Choice of first instrument and musics learned are among the starting points of their musical trajectory, whereby they become imbued with a musical sensibility and knowledge, and ingrained early musical habitus.

When learning their instruments 82% were acclaimed gifted or talented musicians, and 90% were supported in their studies by either or both parents. The literature on becoming a competent musician indicates that *early experiences, preferences, opportunities, habits, training and practice are the real determinants of excellence* (Howe, Davidson, & Sloboda, 1998, p. 399) and that home background and parental support are also critical (Howe & Sloboda, 1991; Shuter-Dyson, 1985), which Lareau (2003) termed as *concerted cultivation* of children by middle class parents. Of the musicians in this study about 85% originated from middle class or above backgrounds. Of concert pianists Shuter-Dyson studied, music was important in their family homes for 90%, with 30% having professional musicians as parents. Of the interview-survey improvising musicians, 69% had a parent or parents who played an instrument: 38% of whom performed in public, 21% as semi-professional or professional musicians. Furthermore, 74% reported that music was important or very important in their childhood homes (only 9% reported music absent); 72% were taken to concerts by their parents; and 40% reported arts and culture being important in their childhood home. The types of music that predominated in their childhood homes were, classical 13%, popular music of the day 21%, jazz and improvised musics 7%, and an omnivorous blend of musics 44%. This is evidence of slow cultivation in music through hearing music, some of their parents playing instruments, and

learning and practicing the skills necessary to play an instrument. Through this process of learning an instrument, acquiring a taste for various types of music, they and their parents were contributing to the reproduction of music within their societies; paying for lessons and instruments, buying and listening to music, going to concerts, and so on; what might be called their aesthetic for music was reproducing the social and economic conditions and structures necessary for music performance and consumption.

Decision to Become Improvising Musicians and Difficulty Transitioning

These improvising musicians mostly started to learn an instrument in childhood, learned classical music through formal lessons (44% learned classical music; 34% learned classical and other music; only 7% started with improvised music), of whom 82% were considered gifted or talented musicians, and 90% were supported in their studies by their parents (taken to lessons, purchase of instruments, etc.). By being considered gifted or talented we could probably conclude that most had developed what Bourdieu would term the habitus necessary for participating in and consuming music through their childhood. Indeed 60% reported they had decided to become professional musicians by the age of 18, and another 90% had decided before they became 26 years old, with 61% performing on stage by the age of 20, and 90% by the age of 26, refining the skill of interactive communication in ensemble performances, negotiation, body language, musical communication and so on.

Of these musicians 86% switched to improvisation as their means of music making between the ages of 12 and 25, by which time they mostly had learned their instruments and the fundamentals of playing to scores. While 57% experienced no great difficulties transitioning to improvisation they reported experiencing the same learning issues as the 42% who found it very difficult to transition to improvisation. The reasons they gave linked to a) generating a new feel-for-the-game, whereby they could produce music without the guidance of a score; b) they had to learn to listen very closely to fellow musicians, determining where these musician were relatively spatially located musically to themselves, and c) to become skilled at anticipating and responding the future melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic directions from prior

and present sounds, harmonic relationship, sound timbres and textures, rhythmic continuities and displacements etc., within the performance. When asked what was most important for the interactive relationships among improvising musicians, Dominic Duval wrote in capital letters: "LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN." Being able to listen, is not just the ability to hear, but the ability to integrate that with extensive musical knowledge, and have the instrumental virtuosity to augment the music. One musician it was difficult first *listening to other musicians, later to use my own talent and feeling*, another two musicians said: *Since I come from the classical music and sight reading, I had to learn to let my ear lead me. And,*

At first I was much freer in my approach yet not technically very developed.... I slowly learnt more "inside" techniques, which I came to understand gave me better control over the instrument and thus better control over expressing myself whether inside or outside. Rather than a limited bag of tricks I came to have more choices available to me when improvising.

Comparing previous study of classical with improvisation, an American improvising musician explained that he thought,

classical music performance is about rote and repetition, and jazz is about spontaneous use of language, so I had to learn the jazz language and get used to using it, as if I were using the English language, to communicate my ideas

And, a musician requires to acquire, *More focus on learning music by ear. Lots of ensemble playing. Different focus on the music: timing, tune structures and phrasing.* The transition to improvisation was: *an eye and ear opener; going into a new world of sounds and meanings.*

Thus, the musicians in switching to improvised music had to learn a new habitus, feel-for-the-game of listening intently with knowledge of musicians improvisational interrelationships. They learn a wholly different approach to music making, but not a wholly free and un-structured approach, whether as idiomatic or non-idiomatic improvisation. It is an interactive and intercommunicative approach to music making with an on-going trajectory that has to be learned and mastered. In developing a feel for the game to

improvise solo or within ensembles these musicians are reproducing improvised music world.

Embodied Knowledge and Technique

Embodied knowledge and virtuosity and improvisation are apparent in the musicians relationships to their instruments. They invest considerable part of their lives learning to master the instrument such that they can improvise fluidly and creatively on stage, and to maintain instrumental skills they invest hours practicing daily, also learning in rehearsal and performance. One musician described playing with fellow improvisers as a free university of learning. A Belgian, flutist, 40:

The instrument is a tool to express my deeper inner feelings. But I don't consider the instrument separately from myself. Somehow, when I blow, the wind instrument is the prolongation of my body. The breath that takes its source in my belly goes only one way up to the exit of the instrument, so that breath is expressing itself in a physical space which is a whole... even if this whole consists partly of my body, partly of the instrument.

Musicians consider the instrument an embodied extension of themselves as thinking interacting individuals within ensembles; one musician thought their instrument, *As a very close extension of the body, and supplement of emotional expression*. This integral relationship of the instrument with the body, feeling and thinking of the musicians is expressed in how long is too long to be absent from their instrument and how they feel with forced absence. Absence from their instrument quickly becomes unbearable, for 51% 2 days or less is an excess absence, for another 40% 3 – 7 days is excessive. One improvising musicians feel after 1 or 2 days absence they feel *as an amputation*; or, *I feel awful and it's very hard not to. I always have it with me, [it is] hard to be quiet*. Another wrote,

It's nice to have some time off from playing – especially when you have been having technical difficulties. And some times you come back to your instrument and feel you are playing better. But after 2/3 days I feel a bit 'itchy'. For longer periods I may get a little depressed

If separated from their instruments from a few days to a week, the musicians report feeling part of their body is missing, “completely lost”, “empty” and disorientated, anxieties and depression. They feel a lost sense of purpose and dread diminishment in their abilities to improvise within ensembles when next they have a concert.

Life History, Biographical Trajectory, Musical Trajectory

In researching the music learned by the musicians and that listened to by their parents, that they heard as children, in the questionnaire it was necessary to simplify the analysis of choices, although a more diverse pattern of music experiences was revealed to the open ended question of type of music. This can be summed in Bourdieu observation:

The principle of the differences between individual *habitus* lies in the singularity of their social trajectories, to which there correspond series of chronologically ordered determinations that are mutually irreducible to one another (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 60)

While there are common elements experienced by these musicians related to their positions within structurally stratified social space, these are constructed out of individual biographical trajectories whose chronological sequences and the details of their experiences may differ somewhat. Nevertheless, there should not be expected an intractable inconsistency between these individuals biographical trajectories and the socially stratified space of inequalities through which it is formed. Within this biographical trajectory, or life history, to explain the ability of the synergetic improvising musician to converge and become part of the symbiotic whole of the ensemble is their individual musical, and social biographic history. One musician explained:

To attain a level of improvisation you need to both have technical expertise, but also I believe a certain level of life experience to really be able to be expressive as opposed to just being a technical improviser. As I live longer, my ability to improvise continues to develop into new directions as the story continues of life. Much of

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what I do regarding improvisation and the music I write is inspired more by dreams and metaphysical connections...

Improvisation is made capable by the cumulative experiences of life, biographical and specifically musical trajectories of improvising musicians, starting from their early musical experiences in the childhood, hearing, the instrument learned, the music studied and played, and then they often began to learn a second instrument, or a third instrument one of which may become their prime instrument. Learning embodies the instrument as an extension of themselves, which needs to be maintained by constant intimate contact and regular practice, as well as through performances. They usually transit through to learning improvisation, learning how to engage within various symbiotic ensembles, and be a contributing voice and to become a source of inspiration and problem solving. They next begin to participate in numerous ensembles guided by distinct musical concepts and projects, each building onto their musical trajectory, influences, ideas, experiences, interactive communications. In network theory, individuals who are members of multiple subcultures provide linkages whereby cultural, aesthetic, resources and innovations of one subcultural group spread to another group which can be quite socially distant (Fine & Kleinman, 1979; 1983), Granovetter termed these weak links. With improvising musicians involved in multiple projects in any one year, they are intersubjectively communication and negotiation with numerous other musicians, nationally and internationally (78% reported performing with international musicians often or usually, 22% did so infrequently, and a mere 7% engaging with only local musicians²). International collaborations among improvising musicians are usual. These collaborations are not only with improvising musicians, but also with improvising and non-improvising artists in dance, performance art, poetry, painting, sculpture (Ab Baars collaboration with Alexandra Engelfriet), video, film, etc. (The musicians' friendship networks are contain a high of self-employed workers in artistic and cultural professions). One musician wrote extensively about his musical and artistic collaborations:

I use to have favourite musical instruments: Shakuhachi, Bass Clarinet and Bassoon. I no longer have a favourite musical instrument. I love my work as a composer/musician/improviser and visual artist. I no

longer see a boundary or separation between them. I am not into the concept of genera. I love all music/sound making and embrace and respect all. I love music that employs improvisation the most. It has been crucial to my excellent quality of life to be diversified in my skills as an artist/person. I am a sound, visual and educational artist. I write music, I play music and I am a professor of music and its history. I make my costumes, musical instruments, masks, sculpture, sound sculpture, etc. I also present and produce concerts by other artist. I am a member of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, I am currently the co-chair of the Chicago Chapter of the organization. I work quite often with poets, dancers, puppeteers, painters and film/videos artist, etc. I love and live the life/works that I am involved in/with. I feel very fortunate to be able live as an artist and I enjoy every aspect of being an artist. I enjoy the grand and the challenging aspects of being and artist.

Their musical trajectories give each musician a singular musical habitus, constructed through immersion in music in their childhood homes, learning to play a first, and second instrument, gaining musical education, often to degree level, transitioning from score to improvised performance, learning in depth significant portions of the history, repertoire of improvisation in the past, participating in multiple music projects engaging in interactive communication and collaborating with varied musicians and non-music improvisors, as well as their life, biographical trajectories means that each musician brings common yet singular contributions to the music making of the symbiotic ensemble. Improvised music making involves intersubjective, interactive communication in preparation for performance and in performance; the expansiveness and heterogeneity of influences working on any one musician is multiplied in the process of collaboration, and do that of innovative music making and problem solving when planning and during ensemble improvisations. Each musician brings shared elements of musical learning and knowledge to the symbiotic ensembles that they collaborate and interact with over time. They engage constantly with their instruments, in practice, composing, and on stage, pulling them into their consciousness and self-identities.

Conclusion

Eying the apparent ease jazz musicians improvise to solve problems, and innovate organisational and managerial studies have increasingly proposed improvisation as a panacea for inefficiencies without adequately understanding improvisation's necessary preconditions. Becker and Faulkner proposed sharing a common, practiced, repertoire of standards, supplemented by face-to-face negotiations explained how unacquainted, ordinary jazz musicians could promptly form groups and improvise. Paradoxically this shared standard repertoire furnished the resources enabling musicians to improvise unconstrained to reproduce that standard repertoire; their improvisations unconstrained by, reproduced a, constrained standard repertoire. Becker and Faulkner acknowledge other improvising musicians exist who improvise to a heterogeneous post-bop canon whose complexity renders their constitutive sub-styles mutually incompatible, requiring intense rehearsals to enable musicians improvise compatibly. The explanatory worth of their repertoire theory confines to ordinary musicians, unable to explain how musicians innovate that standard repertoire, as well as musicians improvising within their 'post-bop canon' who are often more capable than their ordinary jazz musicians of improvising unprepared upon meeting.

A New Cultural studies approach analyses jazz improvisation as conjoining phrases from existing musical performances signifyin' to undermine discriminatory perspectives on African-American social identities. This asserts the creative, virtuosic skills of improvising musicians while simultaneously undermining musicians' abilities to author, improvise meaning; anyone listening to their improvisations can ascribe signifyin' meaning as readily as the musicians themselves, and does not explain coherent ensemble improvisation. To rectify this, Monson tried combining signifyin' theory with Bourdieu's habitus to explain ensemble improvisation and restore meaningful agency, authorship, to musicians. Citing criticism that habitus is excessively structuralist and incompatible with agency, Monson offered that the improvising ensemble can be applied to restore agency to habitus, whereupon the explicandum, the successful improvising ensemble, becomes its own explanans, to explain how musicians compatibly

improvise within ensembles. The utility of Bourdieu's habitus is determined by the explanatory purchase habitus affords research. To give empirical substance to habitus Wacquant researched how Chicago boxers assiduously training with coaches who provided persistent correctional feedback acquired a sedimented, embodied habitus giving them a feel-for-the game to compete in a ring, anticipating in time and space their opponents moves.

To explain the possibility of musicians coherently improvising within ensembles, contributing to an expansive reproduction of improvised music generally, this paper proposed the symbiotic ensemble model. The symbiotic ensemble needs to be porous whereby authority permeates to all of its constitutive synergist musicians. Compositions are presented within symbiotic ensembles to inspire further development of their guiding concept, successively over performances by their synergist musicians. Synergist musicians are expected, and aspire, to be self-motivated reactive and proactive improvising contributors, who initiate novel contributions to ensembles while responding to their fellow musicians initiatives. Their virtuosic qualities as synergist musicians are the sedimented outcomes of their differentially socially structured life and musical trajectories. Their musical life trajectories commonly begin with music in their home, childhood instrument learning, meticulous study and practicing, learning another instrument, transitioning to improvising, performing in, and accumulating, ensemble experiences, and constant practice, interrogation with their instruments, whereupon they intuit their instruments as embodied with their physical and mental being. Consequently, each musician's life and musical trajectories have chronologically sedimented into their singular habitus whereby they can contribute common and unique musical experiences, skills, knowledge and ideas to any ensemble. Moreover, from having participated in numerous, often globally distributed, variegated improvising collaborations, each musician becomes a conduit whereby innovations and solutions to shared problems within musical materials can rapidly spread, cross-fertilise, whereby the symbiotic ensemble becomes capable of generating more than the sum of its musician parts.

Notes

¹ A riff is a short repeated rhythmic figure used as a melody or accompanying background (Monson, 1996, p. 44)

² The 7% and 22% would be most likely the ones who featured in Becker and Faulkner's study.

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